DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 906 HE 025 669

AUTHOR Schuster, Camille; Zimmerman, Robert O.
TITLE Overseas Components of Executive MBA Programs: Planning Survey, The Xavier Experience, Follow-up.
PUB DATE 26 Mar 92
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions (11th, Ypsilanti, MI, March 25-28, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - General (140) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Business Administration Education; Cultural Awareness; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; International Trade; Learning Activities; *Professional Continuing Education; *Program Development; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Xavier University OH

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings of a survey of Executive MBA (Masters of Business Administration) Programs concerning the characteristics of overseas components contained within these programs. Of the 97 questionnaires sent out, 57 responses were received. Among survey findings were that 35 percent have an overseas component and 32 percent are planning one. Thirteen respondents indicated the overseas component is a required part of their executive MBA program. The paper also describes the planning, development, and implementation of the Xavier University (Ohio) overseas program and assesses the program, based on questionnaire responses from 11 of 16 participants (69%). Reactions included the following: (1) participants found the experience to be valuable, and no one indicated that the experience was of little or of no value; (2) the seasoned and knowledgeable business executives and faculty on the 1991 Asian tour were impressed with the diversity among Asian countries and the variety of ways of doing business, even within a particular country; (3) participants would have preferred spending more time on activities that could only be done overseas and spending less time on activities that could be done just as well at home; and (4) the trip did not include enough company visits and countries, and it was too short and hectic an experience. It is noted that the Xavier University course met its goals and that the second version of the program will be implemented in June 1992. (GLR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED347906

Overseas Components of Executive MBA Programs: Planning Survey, The Xavier Experience, Follow-up

Camille Schuster and Robert O. Zimmerman

Xavier University, Cincinnati

Abstract. **This paper will (1) present the findings of a survey of 97 Executive MBA Programs concerning the characteristics of overseas components contained within these programs; (2) describe the planning, development and implementation of Xavier University's overseas experience; (3) assess Xavier's Doing Business in Asia--1991, based on responses to questionnaires sent to the participants of that program.**

Many universities which offer Executive MBA programs have begun to implement overseas components to their programs. As part of its planning effort to develop an international component in its Executive MBA Program, Xavier University conducted a survey of schools which offer Executive MBA programs to determine which schools have overseas programs and the components of those programs.

Using the survey findings as a guide, Xavier designed an overseas experience for its Executive MBA program. A ten day international travel course was offered in June, 1991, sending a total of eighteen students, faculty, and interested business leaders from the local community to Japan and Singapore. Participants had the option of taking the course for credit or as a workshop. Beginning in the summer of 1992, the international travel course will be a required part of the Xavier Executive MBA program.

This paper presents survey data describing the overseas components of Executive MBA programs in the United States, the Xavier model used in Asia during June 1991, and the follow-up assessment of the international travel course.

HE 025 669

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Camille Schuster
Robert O. Zimmerman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 1990, Xavier University's Center for International Business surveyed 97 Executive MBA programs concerning whether or not these programs included or were planning to include an overseas experience, and if so, what the nature of these programs were. From the Directory of Executive MBA Programs (1989), we identified the 97 Executive MBA programs for the mailing list. Of the 97 questionnaires sent, we received 57 responses.

The Executive MBA students at Xavier University had expressed an interest in an international program. Underlying the decision to develop such a program was the presumption that something could be gained from an on-site experience--a value to be gained from experiential learning--that could not be achieved from a classroom experience. Recent work on learning styles and teaching methodologies as they relate to the ways in which people of different cultures learn, (Maruyama 1989), the roles of instructors in cross-cultural business and management training, (Larson and Schermerhorn 1989), and the value of experiential learning, (Shively 1986, and Bolt 1990), underscored the value of on-site experiences. The Xavier project is a case study in the value of experiential learning.

The next section of the paper will review the survey results of Executive MBA Programs with regard to overseas programs. The following two sections will describe the Xavier experience and the participants' responses. The last section will present conclusions.

OVERSEAS PROGRAMS : SURVEY DATA

The results of the 57 respondents to the initial survey regarding other Executive MBA overseas programs are presented in Tables 1-6. Table 1 indicates that of the 57 respondents to our questionnaire, 20 (35%) of the respondents have an overseas components in their Executive MBA programs and 18 (32%) are planning one. No one reported having had an overseas program which was later discontinued. The typical overseas program appears to be one that makes extensive use of hotel and business facilities, spends somewhere between 7 to 16 days abroad, and is a separate required course. Eighteen of the twenty existing programs in place award credit for the overseas experience. 13 of the 57 respondents indicated that an overseas component is a required part of their Executive MBA program (Table 1). Among the respondents, most of the

Executive MBA Programs are located in California (Table 2).

Some (10) respondents indicated that they change overseas locations from time to time (Table 1). Of the 40 locations mentioned in the survey responses, 23 were in Asia with 10 of the 23 programs indicating overseas locations in Japan. One school indicated a Washington, DC, location for those in the program who were unable to make the overseas trip. The overseas program locations are indicated in Table 3.

Survey respondents were asked to specify topics covered in their overseas programs. The topic descriptions were of the respondents own choosing. Therefore, more than one topic name may represent essentially the same subject matter or some of the responses. International Business, for example, may in fact be a generic entry (Table 4). Table 5 presents data from the survey respondents as to the time they estimate spending on the activities listed.

The survey results sere important for identifying parameters of existing international programs in Executive MBA programs.

THE XAVIER EXPERIENCE

Xavier's Executive MBA international travel course grew out an effort to internationalize the business curricula. With the creation of a Center for International Business in July, 1990, it became the focal point for development and administration of the program. The survey of the 97 schools offering Executive MBA programs was an attempt to gain information to aid in the planning, development, and implementation of the Xavier version of an overseas experience.

Xavier began offering an Executive MBA on a contractual basis in 1977 to employees of IBM located in Lexington, Kentucky. The program was offered "in-house." After a lapse of two years, two classes were held on the Cincinnati campus beginning in 1981 with 15 students enrolled in each class. Xavier has continued to offer an Executive MBA, with new classes beginning during the late fall or early winter of each year and concluding a year and a half later. Students in the program attend classes all day Friday one week and Saturday the next week with a summer break. The Class of 93 will be required to complete a program consisting of 48 semester hours, including an international course.

Borrowing from the experiences of other overseas programs and incorporating features which are unique to its own experiences and program objectives, Xavier University developed and implemented its version of an overseas experience for a group of Xavier's Executive MBA

students and faculty undertook an intensive lecture and business tour program in Tokyo and Singapore in June 1991. Several other business leaders from Cincinnati joined the group. Asia was chosen as the site for the first overseas experience because of the growing number of Japanese businesses in the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana area, because we had alumni and business acquaintances in Japan and Singapore who supported the project, and because of the location of a Jesuit university in Tokyo (Sophia University) at which we were able to use classroom facilities.

The purpose of the Doing Business in Asia--1991 course was to explore and assess the role of quality and cultural diversity in the current business environment in Asia. Two options were available to participants. They could take the course either as a workshop or as a three credit hour course. If the participant took the course as a workshop, they were expected to participate in all the course-related activities and write a final report dealing with quality and cultural diversity in the countries visited. In addition, they received feedback on their final paper which was included in the final book and the participant was awarded a Certificate of Completion. Those who took the course as a three-credit course participated in all the course-related activities and wrote a final report. They also received feedback on the paper, which was included in the final book. Those taking the course for credit received a letter grade which was posted on the student's transcript.

Beginning with the Class of 1993, the international travel course will be a required part of the program with the cost of the overseas experience built into the total cost of the program. Feedback indicated that since businesses recognize the need for increased internationalization of curricula and for overseas programs, they are generally willing to pay the cost of the overseas experience if it is a required part of the entire program. If the experience is not required, businesses seem to prefer that the student take on the cost him or herself, which makes the overseas experience prohibitive in some cases. Beginning with the Class of 1993, Xavier will conduct two international travel courses. Half the class (21) will go to Japan and Singapore, while the other half (21) will travel to Europe. Each group will be accompanied by faculty members and business leaders.

The Doing Business in Asia--1991 trip was the prototype upon which the summer '92 programs are based. The instructional components of the course included three activities: presentations by prominent business and government leaders, 5 hour visits to companies in small groups, and cultural tours. We have learned from the participants' experiences by trying to obtain as much feedback as possible--determining those aspects of the trip with which participants were or were not pleased and eliciting suggestions for improving the trip. Those results will be presented in the following section.

FOLLOW-UP

Upon their return to the United States, the trip participants were asked to evaluate the overseas experience. We sought assessments from the participants in the following areas: (1) overall value of the experience, (2) its value as an exercise in experiential learning, (3) the kinds of knowledge that participants perceived they received, (4) program weaknesses and strengths, and (5) suggestions for improvement. Questionnaires were sent to the 16 participants not involved with the program design and 11 responses (69%) were received.

Participants in the Doing Business in Asia--1991 program were asked to indicate the value of activities included on the tour (Table 6). Responses to the questions of "the value of the overseas experience was" and "whether the same things could have been learned on campus," supported the claim that there is a benefit to on-site experiential learning. When asked to indicate the value of the overseas experience on a scale ranging from Very Valuable to Without Value, as to whether the same learning could have taken place in Cincinnati, most respondents indicated that attempting to learn the same thing in Cincinnati would have little or no value. Several respondents offered their own choice by writing "no."

The opinions of respondents as to whether less or more time should be allocated to certain activities are presented in Figures 1 and 2. While some people indicated that they would have liked less time allocated to the presentations by business executives (i.e., both from the U.S. and the host country), others indicated that they would have liked more time allocated to presentations given by business executives from the host country. These and other comments used to compile Figures 1 and 2 suggest that participants wanted fewer of those kinds of activities that could be done at home, while wanting more of those kinds of activities that can only be done while overseas: more presentations by host business people and faculty, more company visits, more cultural activities, and more time. In addition they would prefer less time for presentations by business people or faculty from the U.S., less time sightseeing or touring, and less time together as a group.

Identifying the learning that is inherent in an overseas experience was an integral part of the follow-up questionnaire. Figure 3 lists those comments that provide an overall description of this learning. An examination of the list reveals a concern with process, interaction, culture, and the "doing of business." Responses to individual questions also reveal the kind of learning inherent in this course.

"What did you learn about international business on this trip that was an inherent part of the experience and could not be learned by having class in Cincinnati?"

". . .from being in the location and talking to managers on site you get a 'feel' that couldn't come from lecture or text."

"Side information from company employees, e.g., Japanese job for life idea; employees don't really feel dedicated to a company anymore."

"You can't develop cultural empathy and gain a 'feel' for the culture without being there."

"The true culture."

". . .learn by doing & observing"

"That there is not one way of doing business in Asia anymore than there is in the U.S."

"Cultural impact"

"I learned valuable info. from the host countries presenters about cultural business practices that are culturally different from American business practices. The American instructors could tell us what they <u>think</u> relative to this experience, but the Japanese & Singaporean people could share with us what they <u>know</u>. Many nuances are missed through Cincinnati instruction. No one can speak as authoritatively about a culture as member <u>of</u> that culture."

"The diversity that exists within each culture. It is too easy for us to categorize/stereotype foreign cultures. Often practices we read about are now obsolete. You come to understand the culture by experiencing it through several individual perspectives."

"What do you consider the strengths of the program?"

"The multi-faceted approach that was taken. We examined quality, economics, business and social practices, foods, religion, politics.... The contrasts of Tokyo, Kyoto, & Singapore were enlightening as well. The train ride in Japan allowed us to see the rural Japan, homes, etc. Nice."

"I thought the trips to the companies were <u>excellent</u>! They were the highlight of the program. The one-on-one interaction with the Japanese & Singaporeans was <u>very</u> valuable. This was one of the things that was not a part of the

(another University) program's trip that made this trip outstanding!

"Company tours in small groups of 2 or 3."

"The contacts and the insight these contacts provided."

"on-site, mix of business, faculty & MBA students."

"the companies that you visit"

"corporate visits"

"Organization & Contacts"

"The overall balance between lectures, on-site, cultural & leisure was achieved only by good planning."

Overall, the participants' experiences in the countries did generate learning different from what could have taken place in the classroom in Cincinnati. They have a much richer understanding of the impact of cultural diversity, the implementation of quality principles across companies with different philosophies, and the flexibility required to engage international business. These participants have a better sense not only of the complexity of doing business in Asia, but also the excitement, challenges, and opportunities available for doing business in Asia.

CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the Xavier University's initial version of an Executive MBA experience abroad--Doing Business in Asia 1991, we have come to the following conclusions:

1. Participants found the experience to be valuable. No one indicated that the experience was of little or no value or a waste of time.

2. The seasoned and "knowledgeable" business executives and faculty on the 1991 Asian tour learned and "experienced" the diversity among Asian countries and cultures, and discovered that there is "more than one way" of doing business, even within a particular country.

3. Participants would have preferred spending more time doing those things that could only be done overseas and spending less time on those things that could be done just as well at home.

4. The trip was "hectic," too short, and did not include enough company visits and countries. Yet, most people recognized that there were limits to what you can do in ten days. Interestingly, many would have liked less sightseeing and touring.

In general, participants would like to visit more businesses, interact with more executives, be in more countries, over more time, and travel at a less hectic pace within a 10-14 day period. Their responses indicate that learning did occur, that they value what they learned, and they are "thirsty" for more. The international travel course at Xavier University did meet its goal. The second version of the program will be implemented in June of 1992 and has been modified based upon the responses presented in this paper.

REFERENCES

Bolt, James F. (1990), "How Executives Learn: The Move from Glitz to Guts," Training and Development Journal, 44 (5), 83-89.

Directory of Executive MBA Programs. Published by the Ex MBA Council. University of Illinois. Urbana-Champaign.

Larson, Lars L., and John R. Schermerhorn, Jr. (1989), "Alternative Instructor Roles in Cross-Cultural Business and Management Training," Journal of Teaching in International Business, 1 (1), 7-21.

Maruyama, Magoroh. (1989). "Morphogenetic Teaching in International Business," Journal of Teaching International Business, 1 (1), 77-93.

Schuster, Camille P. (ed.) (1991), "Doing Business in Asia," Published by Xavier University's Center For International Business.

Schuster, Camille P. and Robert O. Zimmerman. (1991), "Overseas Components of Executive MBA Programs: Survey Findings and the Xavier University Experience," Conference Presentation, Eastern Michigan University. Languages and Communication for World Business and The Professions.

Shively, Robert W. (1986) "Experiential Education: The Intern Approach to Learning From Which Everyone Benefits." Agency Sales Magazine. Vol: 16 Iss: 9 September: 38-41.

TABLE 1

Characteristics of the Programs of the 57 Respondents

Number of questionnaires sent:	97		
Number of respondents:	57		
Reputation (Subjective measure):	29 large well known;	28 small less well known	
AACSB Accredited	40 yes	17 no	
Have overseas component in Ex MBA program:	20 yes	35 no	1 Other*
Planning one?	18 yes	13 no	
Had one, but discontinued it	0 yes	57 no	
Return same place every year	8 yes		
Different location each year	5 yes		
Combination of two above	5 yes		
Kinds of facilities used:			
Hotels	13 yes		
Business facilities	10 yes		
Classrooms	6 yes		
Conference centers	3 yes		
Dormitories	1 yes		
Other	2 yes		
Length of overseas program			
7-9 days	7 yes		
14-16 days	5 yes		
10-12 days	4 yes		
5 weeks	1 yes		
4 days	1 yes		
Overseas program required?	13 yes	6 no	
Is overseas program part of another course?	6 yes		
Separate course?	10 yes		
If separate, how many hours?			
1 credit	4 yes		
3 credits	2 yes		
2 credits	1 yes		
6 credit	1 yes		
Do you require foreign language for admission			
to Ex MBA program?		56 no	
For graduation?		55 no	

*An Ex MBA program overseas for foreign nationals

TABLE 2

Ex MBA Program Home School Locations

57 Respondents from 97 Questionnaires Sent

State	Frequency
California	7
Florida	4
Illinois	3
Indiana	3
Ohio	3
Texas	3
Others in 25 states	34
Total respondents in 31 States	57

TABLE 3

Overseas Program Locations

Location	Frequency (# of programs at the site)
Japan	10
Hong Kong	5
Germany	5
England	5
China	2
Korea	2
Thailand	2
France	2
Singapore	1
Pacific Rim	1
Belgium	1
Ireland	1
Italy	1
Mexico	1
Washington, DC	1

TABLE 4

Topics Covered in the Overseas Programs

Topic	Frequency of Response
International Business	5
European Community 1992	4
International Strategic Practices	3
British Business Practices	2
Global Financing	2
Policy Issues / Current Topics	2
Marketing	1
Production	1
Trade Issues	1
Culture	1
European Business Practices	1
Japanese Business Practices	1
Socio-Political Outlook	1
Management of Multinational Firm	1
Industrial Structure	1
Decision Making	1
Motivational Techniques	1
Government Relations	1
Industrial Policies	1
Technology Transfer	1
International Competition	1
International Consulting	1
Pacific Rim Business Practices	1
Global Marketing	1

TABLE 5

Ex MBA Overseas Programs 1990-1991

Percentage of Time Devoted to Each Activity

Activities	Frequency*	Range	Mean	Median	XU-DBA '91 (est.)
Presentations given by your faculty	8	5-40%	15%	12-15%	3%
Presentation given by U.S. business executives located overseas	11	4-10	7.3	6	3
Presentation given by faculty of host country	11	2-30	12.7	15	5
Presentation given by business executives from the host country	17	10-60	27.4	20	10
Tours of business facilities or manufacturing companies	18	5-60	17.1	10-15	5
Presentations by government or trade representatives from host country	14	3-35	10.9	5-9	3
Presentation by government or trade representatives from the U.S.	8	5-20	8.8	5-10	2
Sightseeing/Tours	13	5-30	15.5	15	10
Time on their own	11	4-20	10	10	28
Interactive activity (e.g., interviews, work assignments, group meetings.)	7	2-65	17.3	10	31
Other	2	3-10	6.5	3-10	

*Frequency of a positive response. For example, of the 8 who use their own faculty, they use them 5-40% of the time.

TABLE 6

Value of Activities

Activity:	Very Valuable	Valuable	Neutral	Not Very Valuable	Without Value
Overseas Experience	40%	50%	10%		
Academic Presentations	18	64	9	9	9
Business Presentations	36	55	9		
Company Visits	82	18			
Social Events	27	64	9		
Sharing of Company Visit Information	45	45	10		
Group Tours (Culture)	36	55	9		
Learning Same Thing on Campus				27	27**

**36% offered their own choice and wrote "No;" one person indicated "just the background data."

FIGURE 1

Activities to Delete or Reduce Time Allocated

Frequently Mentioned:

Presentations by government or trade representatives from the U.S.
Presentations given by business executives.
Presentations by government or trade representatives.
Sightseeing/tours.

Mentioned:

Presentations by faculty.
Presenter who did not speak English well.
Time together as a group.

FIGURE 2

Greater Emphasis Activities

Frequently Mentioned:

Tours of business facilities or manufacturing companies.
Presentations by business executives from the host country.
More time in each country--less hectic pace.
Cultural awareness--especially business customs.
Time on own.
Visit more countries.

Mentioned:

Advantages and disadvantages of doing business in this part of the world.
Presentations by faculty from host country.
Best prospect businesses/industries in each country.

FIGURE 3

Learning Inherent in the Trip

Get a "feel" for the culture, different from the feeling that results from lectures or texts.
Informal communication about how business works.
Variety of approaches to doing business in Asia
Diversity within a culture
Business in practice by visiting companies.
Multifaceted approach to interaction of business and culture.
Networking among group, presenters, and companies visited.